steady fall in consumption is indicative of a moral awakening in the people. The decreasing consumption is, however, attributed by the department to the continuance of the depression in the economic conditions brought on by the European War, which seriously affected the purchasing power of the classes who form the drinking population. The special attention of the Excise Commissioner has been directed to a careful investigation of the whole question. The total quantity of foreign liquor imported also fell from 29,217 gallons in 1090 to 25,604 gallons in 1091, or by 3,613 gallons. Perhaps the rise in prices has rendered the consumption of foreign liquor prohibitive. The decline, nevertheless, cannot, in any case, but be viewed with satisfaction. The price of opium was raised from Bh. Rs. 40 to Bh. Rs. 42-8-0 with effect from the 1st April 1916. The total number of opium and ganja shops fell from 255 to 241. Certain modifications were made in the Tobacco Rules in view to the more effective protection of the revenue under that head.

18. **Customs.**—Out of Rs. 13,50,635, the total revenue under 'Customs,' the duty on exports amounted to 91·2 per cent and on imports to 8·8 per cent. An export duty of Bh. Re. 1-as. 8 per 100 lbs. was imposed on tea exported from Travancore with effect from the 1st March 1916. This duty, including the advance payment for 1092, amounted to Rs. 1,26,710. 69·3 per cent of the aggregate export revenue represents the duty on the produce of the cocoanut tree. The Land Customs Regulation, II of 1091, came into force from the 1st Meenam 1091. Rules under this Regulation were passed for the grant of licenses for the storage and sale of articles subject to export duty, in places situated within a distance of one mile from the land frontier of Travancore, and manifest-registering stations were fixed for the customs houses in the taluks bordering on the Cochin State. The revised tariff values of the produce of the cocoanut and arecanut trees, introduced tentatively in 1082, were continued for another three years. The import tariff was also revised during the year.

19. **Stamps.**—Since the close of the year, the introduction of half-chuckram Court-fee stamp paper has been sanctioned to enable parties to prepare copies of documents and produce them with plaints and written statements on durable paper, and to cover the cost of comparing such copies with the original records.

PROTECTION.

20. **Legislation.**—Four ordinary meetings of the Legislative Council were held during 1091. Three Regulations were passed by the Council and three by His Highness the Maha Raja direct. Since the close of the year, the Companies Regulation Amendment Bill and the Christian Succession Bill have passed into law. The latter is the second piece of social legislation in Travancore, the first being the Nair Regulation, I of 1088. This enactment was the outcome of the repeated representations of the members of the Christian community, both in and outside the Assembly. It regulates succession to the property of an intestate and does not, in any way, interfere with the power of testamentary disposition. The Bill was before the public for over four years and was most carefully considered at every stage. There was opposition from some members of one section of the community affected, in regard to certain provisions. On the other hand, there was considerable pressure from a very large section of the Christians, who considered that it would be a calamity to drop the Bill at the final stage. After a careful consideration of all the circumstances connected with the measure, the Bill was passed. If, in the working of the Regulation, any provisions are found to be defective, I may assure you that the Government will not be slow to consider the necessary amendments. The Nanjanad Vellala Bill was withdrawn in response to the representations of the community that a more comprehensive Bill on the subject is necessary. The Criminal Tribes Bill was also withdrawn, as its introduction into the State was considered unnecessary. Two of the most important Bills now under consideration are the Travancore Municipal Bill and the Travancore Chitties Bill. The existing Towns Conservancy and Improvement Regulation does not adequately meet the requirements of efficient Municipal administration. The new Municipal Bill is so framed as to confer considerably enhanced powers in respect of civic administration.

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The Chitties Bill has in view the prevention of fraud, and the exercise of more effective control over *chitty* transactions in general.

21. The Committee appointed to enquire into the working of the Jenmi and Kudiyan Regulation, V of 1071, have submitted their Report. This Report has been published in the Gazette, and the opinion of the public invited on the recommendations of the Committee. In pursuance of representations made by the Ezhava members at the Twelfth Session of the Assembly, a Committee was appointed, towards the close of 1091, consisting of an official President and six Ezhava gentlemen as members, of whom four are non-officials, to enquire into the customs obtaining in the Ezhava community in regard to marriage and inheritance, to suggest the lines on which legislation is necessary with reference to public opinion in the community, and to submit a draft Bill in accordance therewith.

22. Since the last Assembly, Mr. K. G. Paramesvara Menon, who had been returned as the representative of the members of the Kottayam Division to the Legislative Council, has vacated his seat by accepting service under Government. The term of membership of Mr. A. M. Kumara Pillai, the representative of the members of the Padmanabhapuram Division in the Council, will also shortly expire. His Highness the Maha Raja has been pleased to command that the members of the two Divisions be asked to elect their representatives, whose names will be duly submitted to His Highness for consideration. They will meet under the presidency of their respective Dewan Peishkars for this purpose to-day.

23. **Police.**—With a view to promote despatch of work in the department, the Police Circles in the Padmanabhapuram and Trivandrum Divisions have been abolished since the close of the year, except in the town of Trivandrum, and an Assistant Superintendent of Police has been appointed and posted to Nagercoil. The Circle Inspectors in these Divisions are now in direct charge of Police Stations. The measure is experimental, and, if found successful, will gradually be brought into operation in the other Divisions as well. A separate Motor Inspector has been appointed for the effective inspection of motor buses for the carriage of passengers.

24. **Judiciary.**—The work in the High Court having become congested, the constitution of an additional Bench was found necessary to work off the accumulated arrears. The formation of a temporary Third Bench for one year was accordingly sanctioned with effect from the 1st Chingam 1092. The retention of the temporary Second Judge's Court at Alleppey for another year was sanctioned with effect from the 1st Kumbham 1091 and provision has been made in the budget for its continuance till the end of 1092. The appointment of two temporary Second Judges has also been sanctioned for six months each during the current year, one at Nagercoil to clear off the arrears, and the other at Trivandrum in connection with the disposal of an important interpleader suit. The Munsiff-Magistrate's Court at Devicolam was made permanent.

25. **Village Panchayat Courts.**—Six Panchayat Courts were established with effect from the 1st Chingam 1092 at Trivandrum, Nagercoil, Quilon, Alleppey, Kottayam and Parur. Great care has been taken in the selection of Judges for these Courts, and the Government hope that the introduction of this beneficent measure will serve to help the litigant public in the speedy disposal of petty suits. These Courts now exercise jurisdiction in respect of civil suits whose value does not exceed Rs. 30. In the event of the measure becoming popular and useful, which the Government fully trust it will be, there will be no hesitation in conferring enhanced powers on the judges and in opening similar Courts in other centres.

26. **Registration.**—Since the close of the year, the opening of three new Sub-Registry Offices has been sanctioned.

27. Notaries Public have been appointed under the Negotiable Instruments Regulation for the towns of Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey, as also a Controller of Patents and Designs for the State under the Patents and Designs Regulation.

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